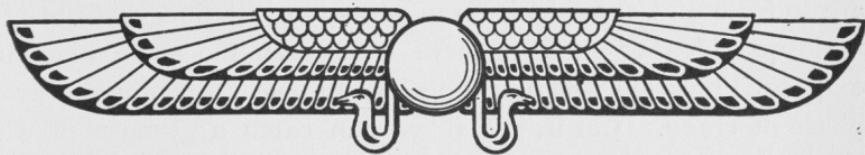


“Point out the ‘Way’—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.”



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

WILLIAM JOHN WALTERS, +
+ EDITH SEARS, +
+ MARIE A. WALSH.

VOL. II. SAN FRANCISCO, NOV., 1895. NO. 4.

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE.*

BY ANNIE BESANT.

As we study the gradual casting-off of the fetters which bind the Soul to rebirth, we come to that which is the most efficient agent in this work—the Law of Sacrifice. All must have been struck with the fact that there is not a religion in the world that has not sacrifice as one of its essential ideas. Take the highest religion that the world has known, or take the lowest, and still you can discover no religion, whether of the highest seer or of the lowest savage, that has not the sacrificial idea for its center. The nature of the sacrifice will differ with the notions of the people amongst whom is the religion; the nature of the offering will depend on the grade of evolution which the Soul has reached; but however crude the conception or poor the working out, however low and mean and unintellectual the idea of sacrifice may be, none the less, out of that poor and base conception, if you look at the lives of the people—out of it you will find have grown the noblest impulses which these people have known. Consider the doctrine of the atonement in one of its lowest and crudest forms. Take it amongst the most ignorant people, who put it in a form repulsive to higher thought. You will find—if you look at it in its working-out in the lives of the people, in the inner regions where words

*From a verbatim report of a lecture taken by a shorthand reporter.

are so little and thought is so much—you will find that out of a burlesque idea of sacrifice there has grown the same high and exquisite devotion which is the glory of every religion and every phase of creed. Let us see if we can catch a glimpse of what this means.

In the highest regions of the universe those who have achieved, those who have gone far beyond the range where our limited sight can follow, or where our fettered thought can touch, who have entered into the highest regions that we yet have knowledge of—these breathe out of that supreme life rays which have in them something of themselves. They can send these rays downward into a life that is exceptionally pure, exceptionally devoted and spiritualized, overshadowing that nature which is mighty by its purity, although it has not yet perhaps climbed to heights of knowledge. They can thus lend to it a divine quality, can breathe into it a divine power, and by the assent of that pure nature, by a real act of sacrifice which that pure one is willing to make, such a one can be raised into a position where he becomes a source from which spiritual life may flow out to the world, and into which in strange fashion the sorrow and the anguish of the world may pour. And in return for the gift of sorrow, the gift of spiritual life flows forth.

That is the mystery which is always implied in the lives of the great Saviors of the world when it is said that "they bear the sorrows of men," they "bear the sins of the world." It is not a mere figure of speech; it is not a mere phrase, a dream which men have dreamed; it is a reality of the spiritual life that every Soul of man which, by its aspirations, climbs upwards to the spiritual regions, reaches there a point where there is no division, where that Soul, instinct with the Divine Life, becomes one with all Souls in their sorrow. Not by separation but by identification, not by a forced affection, but by the deepest reality of the spiritual life, that Soul reaches the plane where division is not—where the world and it are one. And thus it can bear the world's burden, its sin, and its sorrow. It can bear the world's ignorance and breathe into the world its own divine life, and thus become at once the bearer of sorrows for man, and the source to man of spiritual life.

But not only for the purest and noblest is this divine sharing of all things possible; not only for those who are so absolutely pure that the Divine Life can send them forth as Saviors of the world—not only to them is this privilege given, but to others, also, according to their smaller measure. For every one who is willing to take on himself a pain that is not in his Karma, a sorrow that is not of his own past making, every Soul which goes forward by that divine passion that comes from within and not from without, and which says, “I am willing to bear a pain that is not my own, willing to take a sorrow that is not of my own making, to be made a sharer in the Life that takes all grief that it may give back all blessing”—every Soul that takes part of this burden on itself changes the pain that it takes into love and joy, which through it are given to the world.

Think of sacrifice in the form we know it here. Think of that transmutation by fire that goes on, on an earthly altar, when you throw on to it some substance of earth, and as the fire plays upon it, it seems to change, so that all the grosser and more solid parts disappear, and, perchance, there will rise from it a marvelous essence, or incense from the altar. It has changed its character as the fire has worked upon it. Even so, upon the altar of the human heart it is possible to throw suffering into the fire of love (the one great transmuting force that the earth knows; for love is divine, and it is the divine which everywhere transmutes and changes)—suffering which is not yours by compulsion, for then were it no free gift; suffering that you take by your own voluntary acceptance, that you ask to take that the world may thereby be helped. This pain that you put upon the altar is worked upon by the fire, is changed, and gives out the very essence that is in it, coming forth as spiritual strength, spiritual power.

In the course of ages knowledge and power to help are won by the pain that we endure; but in the higher regions of the universe that is done speedily which is done slowly here. What evolution here works out stage by stage is done in a moment by this concentrated fire of love, which is life. And so the disciple, as he rises higher and higher, at last makes good his footing in the spiritual regions, and is able to do in a moment what would take centuries or milleniums in accomplishing here. He can take the

pain, and change it into power, and send that spiritual life downwards for the helping of the world.

That is part of the Law of Sacrifice. As the disciple grows higher and higher, he can do this more and more; as he grows nearer and nearer to the One, he can do it more swiftly, and even to a greater extent; so that at last what he could do perchance only for the few, he becomes able to do for a larger number of his fellow-men. As he becomes one with them he is able to share with them. You must remember he takes from them as well as gives to them; but he takes from them their sin and sorrow, and gives back to them his life and love.

And there is even more, much more, than that.

Another way in which sacrifice is possible: When the disciple, climbing upwards, has reached a stage at which consciousness can work freely on the higher planes, but at which he may not yet bring back perfectly memories of all he does, there is a possibility that pain may be accepted then voluntarily that falls on him when his consciousness is dulled by its physical encasement. It has been thus taken by those who have given up desire for anything that earth can give, by those who have learned that the things of the lower life matter but little in the life of the Soul; who are able to see the relative proportions of things, and by that clear vision can choose better than it is possible to choose in the lower world. Thus, they sometimes voluntarily choose darkness for themselves, so that all the strength of the White Lodge may be turned to other purposes; and this is why sacrifice is spoken of all over the world in connection with incarnate Sons of God, though the word is not a good word, and does not convey exactly what is the fact. On the one side, the higher, the sacrifice is easy; on the other, the lower, it is difficult; on the one side, bliss unspeakable, on the other pain! You well know that though you take a pain for one you love that is a real joy; you do not lose the pain that the lower nature feels, but for you yourself it is merged in the joy of knowing that through the suffering of your lower nature the beloved one is happy. Feeling the pain, yet knowing no regret—full of the joy that flows from giving joy to others—in that lies the essence of sacrifice as made by man.

As regards the one who takes pain on himself, the lower nature

does not realize the joy which, in the suffering, the higher nature is feeling; looked at from a higher plane, the act of sacrifice is an act of beatitude, while on the lower plane is an act of suffering.

And so it is true of every son of man—that he is always in heaven with the Father, and there is in joy unspeakable; but none the less is the body crucified on the cross of pain, and there is sometimes the moment of darkness, great darkness, even to the Soul of one who is an Initiate, when he cries out that his God has forsaken him, not knowing that he has voluntarily taken on himself what feels like separation to the lower nature, but in reality is a closer bond of union in the Heaven where he and his Father are one.

And so some faint light begins to dawn on us, some vision of the glory which is beyond the joy of earth; for everything that earth can give of success or of glory is but as the veriest dust, as worthless dross, beside the supreme glory and joy of an act which only seems to be pain while the bondage of ignorance is on the eyes of the Soul encased in flesh. Here we have a glimpse of the reality of that other life which lies beyond the veil; but there is also the joy of the Master, which on this side is so little understood that men, in looking at the Path, call it the "Path of Woe." It seems woe to those who see it from the earth, while it is the path of beatitude unspeakable when looked at from the other side.

And the beginning for each of us is that we sacrifice; we take pain joyfully when it comes, taking it with our will, and not because we must. Do you know that there is a possibility of connecting our poor lives with those mightier lives of the world? that even through the pains brought by Karma there is a possibility of sharing in this sacrifice? There is sorrow that comes to you by Karmic law. There is pain that comes upon you that you are unable to escape—losses of every kind; pain, mental and physical. You cannot avoid it; you cannot escape it. Do you know that you can make it a sacrifice, although it comes to you by compulsion? The next time that some pain comes upon you, whether of body, or mind, or heart, do not shrink from it, but embrace it; go forth to meet it.

True, you are bound to take it, but you can make the taking it your own *will* as well; take it in both hands, grasp it, make it

your own; take it by your own will, as well as by the law. Say, "I will to take it, and I offer it for the helping of the world." In that way you can turn into sacrifice what otherwise would only have been the exhausting Karmic forces, and it will become a great energy for the helping of the world. Thus, that which you must bear as a slave, you can, if you will, bear as a child, and so become one of the sons of men that are truly Sons of God.

Give your suffering, make it your offering for the world, and it will change into spiritual forces. If only in your daily lives, you can do it now and then—not always; that would, perchance, be too hard; but every time you do it you make it easier to do it again.

There is offered to you the joy of the higher regions; and there I leave it, because all words are vain, all words seem almost irreverence, for speech is not adequate, and here only Soul may speak to Soul. It is only the Voice of the Wordless that can voice it truly, for the words are not of earth; and if the words of the speaker have marred the vision, and lack of words have made the beauty seem less beautiful. Then, as Soul I speak to Soul—not with mortal voice to mortal ears, not with these poor words my tongue can utter, but from my heart to yours, from my Soul to yours, may come a thought that will tell you the Light and the Life are there.

For this, which I have tried imperfectly to say, is the very life of the universe which breathes in the heart of every man from those great Teachers of Wisdom; this is the mighty message which the Masters of Compassion have sent to the toiling world. If it move not your heart, the fault is not in the message but in the messenger; it is not in the thought, but in the speaker. Let your own hearts speak the message to yourselves, the message that only the inner Self can speak to the outer, and you shall see it clearly, undimmed by human interference.

For every man at last is his own priest to the God within him; and no other hands may touch, without profanation, the sacrifice which the human soul offers on the human heart to that Self which is the Self of all.

"Our deeds, whether good or evil, follow us like shadows."

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES.

(Concluded from page 63.)

AND when we pass over into the region of Church connection, and consider the sagest treatment of its Theosophically-inclined occupants, analogous cases are seen. Many men and women are not prepared to cut loose from all anchorage, and drift out into the open sea. With some it is fear. They have been so long accustomed to an atmosphere of certainty, as assured by authority, that they naturally hesitate to abandon it and run the risks of a new departure. What if the old system, however discredited, is really of Divine appointment? what if the new, however plausible, is but an invention of man? With others it is sensitiveness to public opinion. They shrink back from comment, criticism, the pity or the sneer of long-time companions in the Church, too timid to either have or pretend indifference to the odium cast upon so-called renegades. Another class believes that some form of religious organization is a necessity to the conservation of religion and its influence through the community. A mere Society is too incoherent and forceless; only a strong Church can make the religious principle apparent and encourage its wide-spread operation. Without public services and continual preaching and parochial apparatus, religion becomes too vaporous, too intangible, for efficient impress on the populace. Abate the importance of church buildings and worship and teachings, and you will find that the hold of religion, always too slight, slips rapidly off. But much more interesting, more valuable, than any of these is the class which actually finds profit in the ministrations of an organized Church. It is vain to say that this is a delusion: the inner consciousness is too strong for your objection. It is no less vain to call it sentimentality; that simply proves that you do not know the difference between sentiment and devotion. Nor is it less so to attribute all to music and architecture and the reverent demeanor of an assembled congregation. These men and women will reply that they perfectly distinguish between aids to worship and worship itself, and that what really aids has its value. If it be a fact that the solemn chant of sacred songs wafts up the soul to higher planes, evoking from it its own participation in

such rhythmic praise; if it be a fact that the inspired words of the Scriptures gain an added influence when read in public to congregations, as was their purpose; if it be a fact that the exquisite language of the liturgy, so full of tender beauty and religious yearning, voices the profoundest emotions of the soul and gives them strength as they find expression; if it be a fact that public service meets a want of the inner nature, enlarging sympathy, buoying up aspiration, fostering sensitiveness, nourishing spirituality, abating worldliness, strengthening faith, spurring resolution, aiding endeavor—can it be well that all these gains should be discounted and the soul be remitted to solitary meditation and isolated worship? To some this is inadequate; they must find in companionship the bracing of earnestness; solemn accessories are a necessity to their highest moods; why take from them these healthful appliances?

It is to be remembered, furthermore, that Nature furnishes to men, as to plants, every variety of soil and climate and condition. The fir tree is not deprived of its frigid zone, nor the palm of its tropical; the Swiss has his Alpine heights for congenial abode, and the South Sea Islander his ocean-lapped home. In the vast variety of foods over the world, each man finds what is adapted to his constitution. Truth in multiplied forms meets the needs of all classes of minds, and teaching is as diversified as are the pupils to receive it. Shall we say that uniformity reigns in the spiritual sphere, that perception, method, stimulus must be the same for all? If not, then the avenues to the soul must be open to religion from every quarter, that most accessible for each man being that which is to be used.

He who insists that Churches are altogether deleterious, that all old-time doctrine is erroneous, that budding Theosophists should instantly separate themselves from their past and discard the whole circle of familiar beliefs and associations, seems to me to take needlessly severe ground. It is perfectly true that new wine cannot be safely put into old bottles, but this is not the only conceivable course. If there is another which ultimately reaches the same end, meantime conserving the good and rejecting the evil of its alternative, that may well command itself as the policy of wisdom.

This course is suggested by three great facts in the extra-physical world—the safety inherent in truth, the changes inevitable in time, and the transformation consequent on belief. Take them in order.

One is never so sure of outcome as when he conforms thoroughly to truth. Truth is rooted in the nature of things, and has certainty of endurance; error, however plausible or slight, being necessarily doomed to disintegration and failure. Now, it is a fact that in many old religious doctrines, as well as in the Church as an instituted organization, there is a germ of merit. It may have been perverted, misunderstood, distorted, but still it is there. If you deny its existence you commit an error, for falsehood is error and will eventually show its weakness. Besides, to denounce a system for error, and then perpetrate one in doing so, is to bring your own system under both the same condemnation and the same fate. It is not merely honesty—it is safety—to admit with frankness whatever of value exists in any creed or any Church, and with large-minded readiness concede it its place in the great Temple of Truth, where is room for every fact. Thus doing, you have nothing to regret, nothing to retract, and can rest in confidence upon the assurance that the undying right will live on and vindicate itself in time, your own generous recognition helping it to dissipate surrounding wrong and present itself in clearness.

Time, of necessity, brings changes. Human minds are ever growing, and new associations gradually efface old. Larger experience, fuller reading, more copious intercourse with other thinkers, make more pliable mental forms. These are all bound up in time. It by no means follows that a man's opinions to-day will be those ten years hence, still less if his environment is sure to subject him to influences from fresher thought and new discovery. And all evolution is gradual. It is not a leap into perfection. If we expect old opinions and interests to be suddenly discarded for others, we are expecting as an act what Nature prescribes as a process, and must not marvel if she rebels and opposes us. To gently mould, to quietly suggest, to sow seeds for future crops, is more hopeful because more natural.

And belief effects transformation. Like the acid in a chemical

solution, it changes the matter adjacent to it, then that beyond and that to the limit of its range, all taking new shape and color and quality. Beliefs are not walled off from each other by impenetrable barriers, but touch and modify and transmute themselves. Into the consistent convictions of an orthodox Christian introduce the great Theosophic doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. Probably he at first accepts them as independent truths, not conflicting with what is already held. But as they strengthen in their operation he perceives that Heaven is not eternity, for he leaves it to return to earth; that his soul was not a creation at his birth, for it had had many lives before; that evil is not ended by some one else's expiation, for he is still expiating his own; that character is not conferred by the Supreme Being or acquired through faith, for he is himself constructing it by his daily thoughts and acts; that he cannot escape through any vicarious method the consequence of his treatment of fellow-men, for nothing can remove him from the range of universal law; that death is no terror and no hardship, for he has safely undergone it many times and will do so again; that his destiny is not conditioned upon the mercy of another, but upon his own perseverance. Now as these facts vivify themselves in consciousness, they gradually displace the old beliefs and the old motives by the new ones; and then the Day of Judgment and the Savior and the Imputed Righteousness and the fear of death and the expectation of celestial glory simply drop away. You do not need to combat them or undermine them; the two truths he has absorbed have done that for themselves. The new wine has of itself dislodged the old.

Suppose a Church-member becomes a Theosophist. Some one will say that he should be warned against public worship and Church associations. Why so? If his soul craves them, he needs them and should have them. But it by no means follows that it always will. As he comes to realize the indwelling of the Deity, the direct intercourse which requires neither Church or sacrament, he turns within. In the words of another, "The soul must find its own Holy of Holies, and be its own High Priest." Steadily he comes to find the liturgy unsatisfactory, because, while still beautiful and tender and uplifting, it is based on ideas which he

knows to be erroneous and is conditioned on a meditation which he perceives a superfluity. It may very well be, too, that he questions whether his support of an ecclesiastical system is not using money for an object impaired by much of evil, and if that money could not be better spent in disseminating efficient truths of solid value. Steadily Church connection weakens because he has found a truer cult; he drops away from it when at last he is emancipated from its hold. The old bottles cannot contain the new wine; they are simply discarded as useless.

And this, I take it, is the true policy of Theosophy to inquirers and Church-members. Recognize generously every excellence in outside doctrine or organization, gladly seek the esoteric truth hidden in creed and cult, point out frankly where both have erred proclaim the message which Theosophy brings to a distracted world, show how it is potent to heal the ills of society and to elevate individual lives. Trust to truth to vindicate its own nature and its own mission; do not demand revolutions in temperament, or expect to reap crops immediately after the sowing of the seed. The work of displacing stagnant ideas by living ones cannot be instantaneously performed; yet it is going on now, has already attained some progress, is certain of final triumph. For those who know what Theosophy is know also what it is destined to accomplish. Clouds and mists will long obscure the Central Sun, human infirmities will detain the onward stride of humanity to its home, evil will still contest the way and error hide it; but so surely as truth is stronger than falsehood and good more enduring than wrong, so surely will the great purposes of the Almighty press forward to their achievement, and the resplendent glory of a final perfection encircle the race which has been redeemed.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

Who can describe him who is not to be apprehended by the senses; who is the best of all things; the supreme Soul, self-existent; who is devoid of all the distinguishing characteristics of complexion, Caste, and the like, and is exempt from birth, vicissitude, death, or decay, who is always and alone, who exists everywhere, and in whom all things exist, and who is thence named Vasudeva?—*Purana*.

A PILGRIM'S REVERIE.

AT an hour and a period when Mother Nature seemed more than usually restful, miles away from human habitation and interference, and whilst leaning against a tree that stood close to a murmuring creek, I crossed the boundary between the subjective and objective world, and found myself in a narrow lane. On both sides rose high walls built of rough-hewn stones of various size, material and color, of which the pavement, too, was constructed in an irregular and uneven way. A gloomy atmosphere rendered existence dull and dreary; no sound reached my ear whilst I proceeded, slowly, and apparently without aim or object other than to leave such dismal surroundings. As my eyes became accustomed to the dim light, I began to notice on the stones of walls and pavement figures which, by closer inspection, proved like my own face at different periods my of life, but the faces were not alike; each one bore the impress of an imperfect mental attitude expressing a former inharmonious, internal feeling and condition or external action. Many of the pavement stones expressed disobedience to parents and teachers, want of appreciation of parental love and care, even ingratitude towards many from whom I had received kindness and instruction, and these impediments proved most hurtful to my feet as I passed on. By degrees, the lane became narrower, the path rougher and steeper; from pavement and walls were reflected the expressions of moral failings and immoral conduct, of indifference to the woes and misery of my fellow-beings, of feelings of contempt and conceit, of dishonesty and greediness, of anger, hate and revenge, of want of patience and charity, of bitterness and arrogance; in fact, all sins and shortcomings of omission and commission were mercilessly presenting themselves to my humiliated mind. Gradually, the stones began to exhibit in all their offensiveness and hideousness the scenes in which I had been involved. Villainous faces leered at and frowned upon me. Of all obstacles on my way, I found the slimy rocks of hypocrisy the most difficult to overcome; not that they appeared formidable—quite the reverse—yet they caused many a fall, bruise, and defilement.

Whilst slowly proceeding, I felt upon my shoulders a light weight, gradually increasing; the stones on the path became

rougher; soon my bare feet marked with blood the way, and slow was my progress. "Should this be the weight of my sins, of which the scriptures speak!" thought I. "Can I throw it off, or shall I bear it patiently and without murmuring?" But I concluded to bear the load, which I then began to recognize as self-made, like a man. So I toiled on, tired and dull, seeing apparently no end of my journey.

"Oh, Father, take my hand,
And through the gloom
Lead safely home
Thy child!"

Instead of a hand, I perceived a plain wooden staff before me; eagerly I seized it, and by its aid I went on, strengthened and encouraged. I never put it aside, so that at length it became a part of me; its name was and is Trust.

The pervading influence became depressing, the air heavy with offensive smells, and murky; yet I pressed on, leaning on my staff, endeavoring to observe everything and to remain calm and self-possessed, though I wished this humiliating experience over.

At last a bare stone wall seemed to cut off further progress. What to do? I had no thought to return through that alley of horrors; and, remembering a lesson about the application of will-power, I applied it against the stone wall with such force that my whole being vibrated from head to foot, and the wall was split so that I walked easily through it and found myself in a large, white hall with some old-fashioned furniture along the walls—otherwise entirely bare. Through an open door at the further end entered a dignified gentleman in full evening dress, who addressed me quite gently with the advice or injunction, "You had better retrace your steps." Before I could express my unwillingness to do so he disappeared, and I, not intending to follow his advice, went to the open door, from whence I perceived a singular spectacle.

A long slope, without any vegetation, was before me—nothing but large and small blocks of dark basalt, among and over which I saw an innumerable mass of what seemed to be black caterpillars, which by closer inspection proved themselves to be dwarfish seals with human heads, all crawling upwards, with many a fall and sliding back, and making a low monotonous noise. Whilst con-

templating this peculiar spectacle and comparing it to our present humanity, I saw a full-grown man slowly descending from the brow of the hill. He was dressed in a long, flowing, scarlet robe, with a barret cap of the same color. On his forehead was the seal of self-assertion and self-importance. "Venite, venite ad me! "Come, come to me!" sang he with a droning voice, whilst he swung a small, dry and dead tree over the crawling mass, which looked up to him with admiration and expectancy, till the tree broke in two, whereupon the apparition dissolved.

After recovering from their amazement, the seals resumed their march towards a green terrace in the distance, whilst I seemed to glide onward, transported through the air merely by the action of the will. Nearing the eminence I saw a multitude resting on the grass; now they appeared human-like in form and expression, lighter and taller. The terrace was known as the Station of Self-knowledge, and was reached by the path of Humility. Its occupants left behind them many garments of conceit and injustice, many a rag of selfishness, condemnation, meanness, illiberality, sneer, and contempt. The atmosphere was one of rest and peace, and a soft chorus of thousands of voices rose from time to time in harmonious hymns of thanksgiving. Great changes took place in the mental and moral condition of those having reached this plane. Gradually, yet effectually, pride became modesty, wrath turned into tenderness, hate into pity, rapacity into liberality. When a traveler had rested and transformed himself, which seemed to take years of time for some, and when finding congenial companions ready to proceed, the march was resumed.

Above and far beyond, nearly out of sight, height over height arose, in the dim distance other terraces of attainment, more stations of consummation, towards which a multitude of human beings were striving ceaselessly and patiently; yet the road led through dry torrent-beds of passion, and through thorny thickets of cruelty, intolerance, and uncharitableness. Many were the sighs of regret, countless the drops of perspiration and of blood from sore feet;—

" Yet thy command
Bids me press forward.
Father, take my hand,

And safe and blessed
Lead up to rest
Th child."

With what emotions of gratitude, feelings of safety, freedom from danger and injury, the tired and exhausted wanderer sank and reposed on the soft grass, is difficult to describe. In this Station of Charity, a soft, soul-and-body-satisfying, all-pervading influence lulled the weary pilgrims into a blissful state of brief semi-consciousness, from which they emerged to a sense of all-embracing good will, kindness and compassion towards every creature and child of the All-Father. Yet this blissful condition was not one of mere rest or happiness, or indolence, for the impulse toward self-knowledge received at the first station seemed to gather additional strength and qualities; it enlarged to a moral force strong enough to repel the approaches of the powers of darkness, which yet followed like black clouds the pilgrims on their onward march.

The beings, while resting, assumed by degrees a bright, human form, clothed in light garments, which, however, they threw gradually off whenever they interfered with their progress. From the next eminence, gleaming in a violet haze in the far distance, appeared to emanate a subtle, magnetic attraction, aiding, encouraging, and strengthening the pilgrims. In the heavens was written, with letters of fire, the Father's answer to their prayers:

"I will take thy hand,
And safe and blessed
With me shall rest
My child."

Whilst observing this grand spectacle of the onward march of the children of men, sympathizing and rejoicing with them, my personality seemed to undergo a wonderful change—the further onward, the less material. The body seemed first like a luminous cloud-form, soon to change into radiant incorporeal matter, till at last I seemed merely to be a perceptive consciousness. In or out of the body—I know not.

T. G. E. W.

BEHIND THE VEIL.

A DEPARTMENT FOR THE INVESTIGATION BY THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY OF PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO THE PSYCHIC LIFE.

Experiences and explanation of experiences are invited, but all personal or irrelevant detail will be omitted.

AND behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the, top to the bottom; * * * and the graves were opened; the bodies of the saints came forth. (Matt. xxvii.)

The temple is the abode of the spiritual soul; that inner consciousness, that secret place where the Light shines, where Christos abides. Every human soul has its temple. Nature is one vast temple; tree and crystal, dewdrop and flower, song-bird and diatom, are sanctuaries of Divine Thought. But temple and sanctuary are hidden from our vision. The thick, dense veil of materiality, of physical sense, shuts out from our perception everything that is not of the physical quality. It hides from us the soul of things. The finer forces of nature do not touch us. "We live in God and know it not." The past, the future, heaven and hell, are all around us, yet we are unconscious of them because of the veil of Self. The spiritual soul, through whose power we might know, lies far beneath animal desire and material intellect—buried, so to speak, 'neath their darkness. But with the rending of the veil the graves will open and the soul that slept therein will arise.

For some years past this veil of self and flesh has been losing its density. In the microcosm thoughts are felt and seen. In the macrocosm electricity is domesticated and human consciousness is rapidly expanding to the sphere of another element—ether,—and with that perception comes the knowledge of the breath of true life. The power of that breath will rend the veil.

Genevieve Stebbins, in her valuable work, "Dynamic Breathing," thus writes:

"Ether is not light, but it is the medium for the transmission of those forces by means of which light is made manifest to us. It is, in very truth, the one grand, universal solvent of men, planets, sun, and systems, since everything originated therein emerged therefrom, and must ultimately dissolve, atom by atom, and return thereto. To us it comes in the air we breathe, as

vital force. It is the living fire of life, and, therefore, constitutes that breath of God by which man became a living soul. When we breathe involuntarily, as in our normal state, we absorb only so much of the higher dynamic qualities of the air as the physical requirements of our bodies demand. Therefore, we cannot by this means alone attain to anything like the approximate height of our mental and spiritual possibilities, nor even of our physical development. In other words, we cannot and do not, in such natural respiration, obtain all that we need if we are ever to rise superior to our average normal state and condition. To ascend beyond we require much more than the average quantity of "vif" contained in the normal breath. * * * Deep rhythmic breathing, combined with a clearly formulated image, or idea, in the mind produces a sensitive, magnetic condition of the brain and lungs, which attracts the finer ethereal essence from the atmosphere with every breath, and stores up this essence in the lung-cells and brain-convolutions in almost the same way that a storage battery stores up the electricity from the dynamo, and is held in suspension amid the molecules forming the cellular tissue as a dynamic energy, possessing both mental and magnetic powers, always ready for use whenever required."

Let us breathe the breath of soul-life; then soul will dominate matter and the glories and mysteries of temple and sanctuary will be revealed. "The veil of the temple will be rent in twain; * the graves will open and the bodies of the saints come forth."

MARA.

PRACTICAL THEOSOPHY.

THIS DEPARTMENT IS INTENDED TO BE ONE OF ACTUAL EXPERIENCE. ANY ITEMS SHOWING THE AID THEOSOPHY GIVES IN DAILY LIFE WILL BE WELCOME.

"HOW HAS THEOSOPHY HELPED YOU?"

NOTE—This question was printed on the back cover of the October number of MERCURY, and also appears again in the current number. The following are some of the replies we have already received:

By elevating ideals, correcting conceptions, and stimulating motives, it has purged from carnal interests, induced a sense of

proportion, made right evolution the great aim, vivified consciousness of the indwelling Divine, stimulated to perception and cancellation of faults, enlightened as to individual experiences as products of Karma and Reincarnation, excited faith and hope and duty, inclined to effort for good of others, given broader views of responsibility and charity, induced patience, pity, and forbearance. The effect may be summed up as a gradual transformation of life caused by showing its true character, relations, and purposes, as to self and others.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

By teaching me patience. This levels endurance and courage and sustains me under the burden of life in the flesh. Through its doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, the Supreme Justice governing the Universe is realized by my consciousness. I am released from judging or condemning, and recognize no evil save that wrought by Karma through my own imperfections. Thus, the turmoil of passion and desire is quelled and blessed peace cometh from knowing—in the Law all is well. Also it has given new value to religious effort. The Spirit is everywhere; its manifestations are countless. Let my brother find his light where he can, I have no quarrel with him.

Minneapolis, Minn.

KATE BUFFINGTON DAVIS.

For years I sought in vain for satisfying answers to the questions: What is the highest purpose of Man? What is the true cause of the world? What connection has this cause with the world? How do we know of it? Theosophy has answered these queries. Again, I have through it learned that the bewildering duality which we call *mind* has a *Master* to which it yields when bidden; and, further, that this *Master* also recognizes *beyond itself* a "*One only without a second.*" I rejoice greatly that Theosophy contains infinite knowledge and wisdom to which I may yet attain.

Chicago.

MARY WEEKS BURNETT, M. D.

Theosophy has taught me the Law of Karma, or Cause and Effect, carried through all planes of substance. My first glimpse of the Eastern Philosophy came through "*The Purpose of Theosophy*" by Mrs. Sinnett, and as I read of Karma therein realization of Divine Justice entered permanently into my soul. It altered my

relations to others completely, making it impossible for me to blame others for what happens to me. I am alone responsible for the good and the ill; and the grim satisfaction of having the culprit under my own supreme jurisdiction has often held back the natural impulse to censure the instrument through which my own Karma acts.

Rome, Italy.

MARY WRIGHT.

I see Theosophy as a search-light thrown on the ages that have been, that which is, and those which will be. If I do not see all that that light reveals, it is because of my own short-sightedness; and Theosophy, as the great Revealer, helps by giving the incentive to progress—to see all and know all, and finally, to become that light.

J. B.

It has cast a bridge of golden sunlight over the chasm of death, whereby human love—after pain has purged it of all self-seeking—may meet the immortal love-thoughts of those who grew weary in the earth-battle, and now weave the broken threads of life into the glorious garment of the Higher Self.

Chicago.

E. L.

AROUND THE ZODIAC.

NOV. 22D TO DEC. 21ST.

On November 21st the Sun enters the sign of the Archer (Sagittarius), and until December 21st his rays shed upon the Earth the influence of this part of the Zodiac.

Sagittarius represents the animal subjugated by the human. It types man's dual nature, also the duality of mind as known to us. Jupiter is the planet of this sign. The constellations related to it are the Eagle, the Crown, and Antinous, or Cupid.

The Hindus connect Sagittarius with Arjuna, warrior and hero. Sagittarius is pre-eminently the sign of the struggle between mind and matter. It is related to the Fifth race. The carbuncle and the turquoise both have been assigned to Sagittarius by different authorities. Among plants, it rules feather-few and agrimony.

T. S. ECHOES.

“THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIA” reports a great increase of activity resulting from Countess Wachtmeister’s visit. The daily papers have given her lectures very favorable reports. Australia is awaking to Theosophic ideas. A new Branch has been formed near Sidney.

The Branches of the T. S. are urgently requested to follow the example of the Toledo and Toronto Branches and send each month to MERCURY some account of their work, whether it be of a public nature or in the line of private study. Ideas that have proved interesting and helpful to any one group of workers will be helpful and interesting to others, and the pages of MERCURY are the place for them. Isolated members also are hereby asked to help in this interchange of thought. Let us come in touch one with another, for unity is strength.—[ED.]

The many Branches of Scandinavia have been formed into a Section. Mrs. Besant writes in “Lucifer”: “The Countess Wachtmeister sends me the following extract from her congratulatory letter to Dr. Zander: ‘H. P. B. was so anxious to keep the unity of her work complete—the Lotus flower, with its seven petals, that we were to carry on into next century unsullied and pure, with its spiritual fragrance. We have now five petals, the European, Indian, American, Australian, and Scandinavian Sections, but before the end of the century we have to form two more Sections if the flower is to be complete with the seven petals.’”

TOLEDO, OHIO.—Our Branch has twenty-one members, all determined to go ahead and do the best we can, no matter what may be the discouragement. Some of us, though, do feel a little “shaky” at being so unexpectedly thrust forward into taking the leadership.

Through the heated term the Toledo Branch has held its Porch meetings, and on October 10th resumed its weekly meetings at Lotus Hall on Thursday evenings. These meetings are open to the public.

Original papers will be given or some subject discussed, which subject is announced at the previous meeting, so that each member may be prepared to take part in discussion. We have just finished Mrs. Besant’s “The Building of the Cosmos.”

We want to know what other Branches are doing, and whether they are rallying to the work again.

We extend to MERCURY our most earnest wishes for a prosperous future. Its very presence each month is encouraging.

KATE H. MAGUIRE.

TORONTO, CANADA.—The Toronto Branch has made a new departure which commends itself to the practical mind. It has had lectures on vital topics of the day, delivered by representative speakers. A short explanation of the Theosophical teachings, with special reference to the subject of the address, is given by an F. T. S.

The Corresponding Secretary writes: "I send you to-day a copy of Toronto Sunday World with a report of our second meeting of the enclosed list. We had a very successful meeting. Attendance about sixty-five, which fills our hall nicely, and I think the effect of the meeting in putting us in the position of one of the recognized institutions of the day will be of great importance. Other papers here besides the World had short reports of the meeting—none so full as the one I enclose. We have also commenced the distribution of the pamphlet, 'Outlines of Theosophy,' which I enclose, sending out 100 per week. Have chosen one of our best counties, and will devote all our energies there until we have taken hold of it or conclude to move on. I think the outlook for a vigorous winter's campaign here is good. The members are becoming enthusiastic, and, altogether, the indications are that Toronto T. S. will, this coming winter, do more effective work for Theosophy than she has ever done in the past.

F. G. TITUS."

English Letter.

Since my last letter to you the work of the European Section has gone on well and quietly. Applications for membership are coming in steadily, showing that the interest in the Society is not diminished.

The important "Executive Notice" from the President Founder, issued in the October "Vahan," has been a most valuable contribution, explaining, as it does so clearly, the true origin and early history of the Theosophical Society. As Col. Olcott had the original minute book of the Theosophical Society here, I, as well as other members at Headquarters, have read the minutes, and are able to testify to their being written and signed by Mr. Judge and A. Gustam.

Col. Olcott left for India on October 8th. The night before his departure a conversazione was held at Headquarters, in order that members might have the opportunity of meeting their President. There was a good attendance, and a very pleasant evening was the result.

Mrs. Besant is still in London, having postponed her leaving for India until the first week in December, in consequence of a recent attack on the Society. This has caused her much personal inconvenience and considerable loss; and in India much disappointment is felt by the members who were looking forward to having her amongst them so soon again. Mrs.

Besant has just ended a series of lectures given in Queen's Hall, Langham Place, on the following subjects: Sept. 15th, "Reincarnation, its Evidences"; Sept. 22, "Reincarnation, its Object, Meaning and Methods"; Sept. 29, "Reincarnation, its Outcome"; Oct. 6, "Earth and Devachan, the Relation between Embodied and Disembodied Souls." Another set has just been arranged, and the subject is to be "Man and His Bodies"; these lectures will begin on October 20th. That lectures on such subjects should attract large audiences, showing increased interest, is a source of much satisfaction to our members, proving as it does the great advance Theosophy has made in public opinion during the last few years.

In my last letter I gave you the names of the Lodges that had seceded from the Theosophical Society, one of them being, the Bow Lodge in the East End of London. All the members of the Bow Lodge were not included in the secession, and those who remained in the Parent Society have recently applied for a charter, which has been granted, and they have formed a Lodge called the East London Lodge, with Mr. Harry Banberry for their President. As an inauguration, Mrs. Besant gave a public lecture at the Bow and Bromley Institute on "Theosophy in Daily Life."

The Blavatsky Lodge has recently held its annual meeting. The Secretary gave a most satisfactory report of the condition of the Lodge. Mrs. Besant was unanimously elected President for the ensuing year. I send the new syllabus, as it may be useful to your readers:

Oct. 3, Superphysical Science, A. P. Sinnett; Oct. 10, Our Work, Annie Besant; Oct. 17, The Path of Service, C. W. Leadbeater; Oct. 24, Spiritualism and its Spirits, A. M. Glass; Oct. 31, The Theosophy of Valentinus, G. R. S. Mead; Nov. 7, Occultism in English Poetry, III, Mrs. Hooper; Nov. 14, Elementals in the Middle Ages, A. A. Wells; Nov. 21, Theosophy and Evolutionary Development, M. U. Moore; Nov. 28, Theosophic Alexandria, G. R. S. Mead; Dec. 5, An Adept of the Last Century, Mrs. Cooper-Oakley; Dec. 12, The Wheel of Fate, Alan Leo; Dec. 19, Peru. B. C. 12,000, C. W. Leadbeater; Dec. 26, No Meeting. On November 10, the Sunday-evening meetings will begin and will be held twice each month until further notice. These meetings are most popular and bring many inquirers; they are less formal than the Thursday evenings; two or three members open the discussion and questions are freely asked; many inquirers come and much interest is aroused.

The North London Lodge, which has always been one of our most active working centers, has settled into its regular winter work. On Oct. 2, Col. Olcott gave an address, taking as his subject the history of the Society from the beginning. Public meetings are held every Wednesday evening. Members' classes for study are held on Saturdays and Mondays. At the

former the subject now under study is the *Astral Plane* by C. W. Leadbeater. At the latter *The Self and its Sheaths*, by Mrs. Annie Besant. On Thursdays a class for Associates is held.

There is much literary activity in the Theosophic World just now. The first series of *Old Diary Leaves*, by Col. Olcott, is in the Press. Mrs. Besant's five lectures, delivered at the Blavatsky Lodge, entitled, *In the Outer Court*, will shortly be published, and her articles on Karma, which have been coming out in *Lucifer*, will soon be printed as another manual.

Students will be glad to know that the transactions of the London Lodge, entitled *The Astral Plane*, by C. W. Leadbeater, will shortly be produced as one of the series of manuals. It is a most valuable contribution to Theosophic literature, and all students should possess a copy.

The European Section, having now returned to its normal calm, the general Secretary has been able to devote considerably more time to his literary work; he has just published four essays entitled the *World Mystery*, being a reprint of four articles from *Lucifer*. Mr. Mead has also recently written, by request, a preface and bibliography to the new edition of *Plotinus*, which is to form a volume of "Bohn's Philosophical Library." At the present time he is engaged in translating the *Pistis Sophia*; it will be a work in two volumes, the first being confined to the translation and the second being the commentary on it.

L. M. COOPER.

Executive Notice, T. S.

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, LONDON,

September 7th, 1895.

The present Executive Notice is issued to remove the impression that the Theosophical Society, save and except the Branch of New York (known as the Aryan Theosophical Society since 1886), has, since 1879, been a merely *de facto* body "solely the result of growth, and not the result of votes." This purely fictitious claim, which is unsupported by one fact of history, but is negatived by the whole documentary record of the Society, was first put forth at the Boston Convention of our late American Section on April 26th, 1895. The Report of proceedings was sent to me by Mr. W. Q. Judge, with a letter in which he recommends me to adopt this view as the correct one. I left Madras for Europe on May 5th and landed at Marseilles May 30th, when I received Mr. Judge's letter; with the first news of the Boston "Act of Secession," and this pretended historical narrative. Seeing the grave consequences which must inevitably follow if I passed this over without denial, and knowing of the existence of the clearest proof of its falsity, I wrote at once to the Headquarters at Adyar for the original minute-book of the Theosophical Society Council's proceedings

to be sent me; and in the "Executive Notice," issued at Zumariaga, Spain, on June 5th, promised to publish the excerpts which bear upon this question. The book came to London while I was absent on a Continental tour, from which I returned this morning, and I now redeem my promise.

The important documents are two reports of meetings of the Society. The first is both written and signed by William Q. Judge, Recording Secretary *pro tem.*; the other is written by Mr. Judge but signed by A. Gustam, Secretary. They read as follows:

I.

"Proceedings of the Theosophical Society Meeting held at 302, West 47th Street, July 16th, 1877.

"Present, the President and a quorum.

"After the transaction of routine business, and the reading of reports from the Corresponding Fellows in India, China, Greece, England and the Pacific Coast,

"It was, on motion, resolved that the President have discretionary power to authorize the formation of branch societies in Great Britain and Ireland India and elsewhere; providing that the presiding officer chosen shall in each case obligate himself to obey the instructions of the parent Society as to the work of his branch Society, and the Fellows of the branch Society take each an obligation to obey the directions of their own President, and shall be willing to conform to the rules of this Society *as communicated to them from time to time through the President.*

"On motion, it was resolved that the provisions of Article 1. of Chapter VI. of the By-Laws, which provide for an Annual Meeting of the Society, may, at the discretion of the President, be suspended, and in case the President should issue no notice of an Annual Meeting the present officers shall remain in office until their successors are elected and duly qualified.

"On motion, it was resolved that the Headquarters of the Society may be transferred by the President to any foreign country where he may be temporarily established, and he may appoint any Fellows in good standing to fill, *pro tempore.* either of the executive offices, as he may find it necessary for the transaction of business.

"All by-laws in conflict with the provisions of the present resolution are, by unanimous vote of all present at this meeting, suspended,

"On motion the meeting adjourned.

"(Signed)

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE,

"Secretary *pro tem.*

"(Signed)

H. S. OLDCOTT,

"President."

II.

“Meeting of the Theosophical Society held at 302, West 47th St., August 27th, 1878.

“Present, the President and a quorum.

“On motion, resolved that, in case the Headquarters of the Society shall be at any time temporarily established in a foreign country, the President may in his discretion admit suitable persons to active fellowship upon their application in writing and their taking the oath required of candidates.

“He shall also have full power and discretion to make such rules and regulations and do such things as he may consider necessary for the welfare of the Society and the accomplishment of the objects which it represents.

“All By-Laws inconsistent with the above are hereby repealed.

“After the transaction of routine business the Society adjourned.

“*(Signed) A. GUSTAV,*
“*Secretary.*

“*(Signed) H. S. OLcott,*
“*President.*”

The following points are covered in the above two documents:

1. The President was empowered to form branches in all parts of the world, in his discretion and without seeking the concurrence or endorsement of Council;
2. The annual meetings of the Society were suspended during the President's pleasure;
3. The President was given the power to transfer the Society's Headquarters to any foreign country in which he might fix his residence; no one in particular being specified, but the Headquarters to follow the movements of the President;
4. Full authority was given the President to appoint competent persons to fill executive offices and to admit to membership, without recourse to Council or the Society;
5. Unrestricted power was given him to make such rules and regulations and do all such things as he might think best for the interests of the Society and the movement in general, without recourse to either Council or Society;
6. No obligation was laid upon the President to report his actions or their results to the Council or Society of New York;
7. All existing By-Laws in conflict with the full exercise of these ample functions and powers by the President were suspended by the Resolu-

tion of July 16th, 1877, and absolutely repealed by that of August 27th, 1878.

Each reader of this document will form his own opinion as to the wisdom and motive of the Boston Resolutions of April 26th.

To make the thread of history complete, I need only say in few words what will be found recorded in full detail in the series of executive reports, addresses and other documents that have been officially published from time to time in *The Theosophist* and elsewhere.

When Madame Blavatsky and I moved to India, new members flocked in, and I was soon obliged to keep the movement within bounds by forming new Branches in all directions. Of course, it would have been nonsensical to have asked them to report to New York, when there was no person left who was then competent to deal with them, nor one in whom they felt the least interest, if they even knew them by name. So we adopted the practical course of allowing them to form their own By-Laws, subject to my official approval. There being now several organized groups instead of the original single one of New York, all chartered from the Bombay Headquarters and all thus forming parts of the expanded whole Theosophical Society, there had to be a recast of the organization and of its By-Laws and Constitution; which was in due course effected (*vide Theosophist*, May, 1880, and June, 1881). The new Headquarters became the vital centre of the entire movement, the source of all its activities. Meanwhile, the New York Society, having dwindled away to a few members, gradually ceased holding its meeting; my *locum tenens*, Major-General Doubleday, had no functions to perform; the Secretary was in a hard struggle for bread; and there was no social centre to replace the old "Lamasery." The Society lay in a comatose state year after year until 1886, when, as I have elsewhere shown, Mr. Judge hunted up a few of the old members, who, with him, re-organized as the Aryan Branch of the Theosophical Society, under a charter granted them for the purpose, and have so continued until, in April last, by their delegated action at Boston, they forfeited their charter and ceased to exist as a part of the Theosophical Society proper. Before this, *viz.*, on July 19th, 1881, Mr. Judge officially reports to me the Spiritualistic investigations which the members at New York were pursuing, and speaks of the old New York Society as a Branch. (*Theosophist*, September, 1881.)

The history of the movement, of the springing up of nearly 400 Branches, of their grouping into Sections, of the various additions to and amendments of the Rules and By-Laws, are all of documentary record and need not be dwelt upon.

The members of the Society and the public were entitled to know the foregoing facts, and they are given without further comment.

BOOK REVIEWS.

“LUCIFER,” OCTOBER.—Mrs. Besant, in “On the Watch Tower,” relates some experiments on photography. “Vital Force” discusses India and the Missionaries, and refutes the absurd rumor that she has left the T. S. “Orpheus,” by Mr. Mead, grows more luminous. This work, together with “Pistis Sophia,” will make a valuable acquisition to the earnest student. “Karma” and the “Doctrine of the Heart” are concluded. We shall have them soon in book form.

“The Rationale of Life” is continued. We quote the following: “The rationale of life is nothing less than devotion of all the faculties of the nature to that Spiritual Principle whose method is evolution and whose field is the plane of human life.”

Mr. Glass continues “Early Christianity and its Teachings.” “Jaganneth” is a short and interesting account of this peculiar worship and its festival (known to us as Juggernaut), by Mr. Leadbeater. “Two Houses” is concluded in this number.

THE THEOSOPHIST.—The September number completes the sixteenth volume. “Old Diary Leaves” is followed by a curious archaeological research into the genesis of the art of architecture, called S’ilpa-S’astrā. Right among articles of Hindu lore and Jain precepts are some bright comparisons between Plato’s words and the Stanzas of the Secret Doctrine, by our own Kate Buffington Davis. “Leaves” appeals to the heart of the aspirant. The conclusion of Dvivedi’s excellent lecture on “Spiritual Culture” and a discussion about the condition of the Brahmo Somaj afford glimpses into the life of our far-away brethren. E. S.

“THE VAHAN,” October, has a valuable discussion on the “Reality or Unreality of Matter.” For those who may not see this number we quote from it some pertinent thoughts: “From an idealistic point of view, matter is unreal, and consciousness is the one reality; from a materialistic point of view, matter is the one reality. The great thing is to try and understand the thought of a writer rather than to ride a word to death over the hurdles of paradoxical conundrums.” “The phenomena of every plane are real upon that plane, but unreal on the plane above. * * * It is, however, an abuse of terms to call it (matter) unreal, while we live among its phenomena, are ourselves a part of it, and are unable to perceive anything else.”

Due notice of THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA, edited by Dr. Paul Carns, will appear in next issue. E. S.

The theme of Theosophic schools again comes up. Evidently, some entertain the idea that Theosophy is a Church with a creed.

THE HINDU BOYS' JOURNAL, September, has some fine reading. "Our Religion" is full of interest. "Is there a God?" discusses scientific evidences of creative Intelligence. An excellent paper on "Spiritual Revival" begins in this number.

"THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIA" reprints from *Lucifer* "The Purpose of Theosophy," by Mr. B. Keightley.

The question department deals with the why and wherefore of manifestation, with its attendant miseries—with the moon's influence and Karma. The Course of Study is very practical. Mrs. Hunt's "Lotus Circle" should be read by all interested in the development of youth.

LILITH. A Romance. By Geo. McDonald. Dodd, Mead, & Co. For sale by A. C. McClurg & Co., Chicago.

This wierd poetic phantasy of the psychic realms may prove to be the swan-song of its author. Springing years ago from that dainty creation, "At the Back of the North Wind," the arc of his life's mysticism fitly rests upon this noble allegory. Its forceful images differ both from Eastern symbolism and Western orthodoxy, and show that his occult knowledge came from genuine inspiration.

It is difficult to sketch an outline of these plotless soul-pictures. A student passes through a magic mirror in the garret, at a certain polarization of the sun's rays, into "the region of the seven dimensions;" seamed by dry water-courses between ghost-haunted woods and plains heaving with horrible monsters. The bleak, strange country is lit up by an erratic sun and many moons.

His only speaking companion is an ancient raven, who, when he turned his back, "appeared to have taken up his shadow" and became a tall, thin man in black, the figure of the librarian of an ancestor, now calling himself a sexton, and whose real name is Adam.

These are some of his wise sayings:

"To go back, you must go through yourself. * * * You have not left your house, neither has it left you." And again, "You are yourself the only riddle. What you call riddles are truths, and seem riddles because you are not true. The universe is a riddle trying to get out, and you are holding your door hard against it." "Everyone has a beast-self—and a bird-self, and a stupid fish-self, aye, and a creeping serpent-self, too—which it takes a deal of crushing to kill! He has also a tree-self, and a

crystal-self, and I don't know how many selves more, all to get into harmony."

The bird-guide leads him to "the sexton's cottage" and he meets Eve. "The life of her face and her whole person was gathered and concentrated in her eyes, where it became light; * * * the eyes had life in them for a nation." Around the cottage stretched the church-yard. There was no visible end to the innumerable aisles of dim, straight couches, and on each lay a dead form under a snow-white sheet. The moon peeped through cathedral windows, and a wind of icy coldness swept over the still faces of the sleepers, growing young and peaceful under the influence of something "deeper still than death."

Another beautiful conception is the group of immortal children, the "Little Lovers," led by the pure-hearted Lona, always nursing the babies they find in the "Evil Wood." After leaving them he arrives at a cottage in the wilderness, the dwelling of a woman whose face is always muffled; a backward glance reveals its beauty, streaming with tears of compassion, for she is the Lady Mara, child of Adam and Eve. She tells the student of the wicked Princess of Bulika, and how, by her power over the four elements, she gathered all the waters of the land into an egg, which she carries in her hand, so that no rain falls and the rivers are dry.

In the desert of phantoms he finds the naked form of a woman, with one hand clenched motionless and wasted to a skeleton. For months he labors to bring this companion of his solitude to life, warming the cold form daily in a hot stream that flows through the cavern, where he guards it on its couch of leaves. He is often bitten in the night by an invisible leech, and grows weaker as the emaciated form rounds out. One day Lilith rises in tall and awful beauty, and leaves him, scornfully flinging an icy blow upon his forehead by a wave of her hand. He follows, and sees her fall on her face and disappear at the instant that a spotted leopardess bounds forward over the grass pursued by a white one. In the city of Bulika, the white and spotted beast struggle over an infant, which the white one carries off to the woods, and a mother tells him that the Princess sends her leopardess to devour every child as soon as born. The mind of Lilith is typified by a palace-hall of black marble, full of eery shapes and unlit save by the flashing beauty of the Princess. A sudden change of scenes, due to her arts, lands them in the student's own library, and the majestic Adam urges Lilith to repent. Disclosing the black spot on her side, he declares: "Nor will it leave thee until it hath eaten to thy heart, and thy beauty hath flowed from thee through the open wound." Her magic bursts Adam's bonds, and she leaps first through the mirror into another state of consciousness.

Once again the man finds the Little Ones. They decide to march on

Bulika, mounted on their trained animals. They conquer the inhabitants; but when Lona rushes towards the Princess with a glad cry of "Mother!" Lilith kills her own child.

Bearing the body of their Little Mother, and the bound Princess, the Little Ones came to Mara's cottage, "the House of Bitterness" where Lilith's, repentance occurs, through suffering. A white, hot thing crawls from the fire into her branded side, and Mara says: "She is afar in the hell of her self-consciousness. She knows that she is herself the fire in which she is burning." Mara bids her open her left hand, but she refuses, and endures further agonies. At last the fountains of her eyes gush forth, and she yields. Then the gentle Spring rain "bedewed the desert places around the cottage, and the sands of Lilith's heart heard it and drank it in." At the sexton's cottage Lilith knelt to Eve, and "the mother of us all" bore her tenderly to the couch prepared for her in the Chamber of Death. She laid down wearily and the shadows gathered in her eyes; in vain she tried to open the long-closed hand, and not till Adam severed it with the sword of the Cherubim could she fall asleep. Then those two who "watch the flock of the great shepherd" told the loving Little Ones: "She is busy forgetting. When she has forgotten enough to remember enough, then she will soon be ripe and wake."

When the clenched hand of the Princess is buried at the head of the rivers, the waters once more flow over the barren land and submerge the monsters. Then the student lies down on the couch next to Lona, and, stilled by the pure coldness, dreams many dreams.

Literary discussion is ripe over this book, and one marvels that any but Theosophists or natural mystics can interpret it. While it is an artistic blemish to change the scene to earth so frequently, it is an occult truth that journeys in a thought-body or new plane of consciousness increase gradually. The unearthly atmosphere of the Astral Plane (the real theatre of the book's action, the "region of the seven dimensions" being a trifling misnomer), is well suggested by the strong and simple language. Here bloom the "prayer-flowers," among other thought-forms, such as the dove born in a human heart; for Adam says, "When a heart is really alive, then it is able to think live things." Vivid visions illustrate how actions done on earth are mirrored endlessly in the Astral Light, while Kama Loca is well typified by the vast church-yard where the shades lie, growing younger, until the "second death of the occultists," the awakening into Heavenly Life.

The characters symbolize the human principles. Eve is Buddhi, the Soul of the Universe, or the spiritual essence of man. Adam, who says, "She is very good to let me live with her in the sexton's cottage," represents Manas, a Son of Wisdom, the real Knower in our minds; united to

Eve is the Higher Self, the Over-Soul of Humanity. Mara, the Lady of Sorrows, is the type of all those Elder Brothers and Adepts who recognize their divine parentage and work for their earthly brothers, through white magic, with "the compassion of all the Buddhas." The principle of selfish desire, or Kama, appears as a two-dimensional shadow, controlling Lilith by its evil power, while she, Adam's first spouse, is that reflection of Manas—the human intellect and reason—that sometimes wills through black magic to be "Queen of Hell." In her hand are the waters of Spiritual Truth, held back by pride from the soil of the heart. Her daughter Lona is purity and love for others, and only her self-sacrifice can accomplish the redemption of Lilith, the evolution of the human into the Divine.

E. S.

Received—"The Lamp," Toronto; "Notes and Queries," Manchester, N. H.

The Brahman which has been thus described (as immortal and, as the Gayatri) is the same as the ether which is around us; and the ether which is around us is the same as the ether which is within us, that is, the ether within the heart. That ether in the heart (as Brahman) is omnipresent and unchanging. He who knows this obtains omnipresent and unchanging happiness.

—*Chandogya-Upanishad.*

But those in whom dwell penance, abstinence and truth, to them belongs that pure world of Brahma, to them, namely, in whom there is nothing crooked, nothing false, and no guile. He who has known the origin, the entry, the place, the five-fold distribution and the internal state of the life force, obtains immortality.

—*Prasna-Upanishad.*

He who knows the bliss of that Brahman, from whence all speech, with the mind, turns away, unable to reach it, fears nothing. He does not distress himself with the thought, Why did I not do what is good, or what is bad? He who knows these two, good and bad, frees himself.

—*Taittriyaka Upanishad.*

I know, O Arjuna, all the beings who have been, all that now are, and all that shall hereafter be; but there is not one amongst them who knoweth me. The enjoyments which proceed from the operations of the senses are wombs of future pain.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER.

[This Department will be devoted exclusively to children ; questions and answers from Lotus Circles on Theosophical Subjects are invited and will receive special attention.]

AIDS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN OCTOBER NUMBER.

11.—Astral body is a generic term, simply. It tells the nature but not the kind. For example, if one says "There is a tree," the nature of the object seen is told, but not the kind. The tree might be an oak, or a poplar, a willow, or an apple tree. And so when one speaks of Astral body, it might mean the Linga Sharira, or Kama-manasic form, or the ethereal body of holy souls, the "just men made perfect," or the transitory form used by adepts when they wish to travel to a distance. Then, too, thoughts take form. Sometimes the form of the thinker; sometimes of the thing or quality thought about; and these forms belong to the Astral. Certainly, they are thought forms, and yet Astral. When the Linga Sharira, or real Astral body, leaves its physical body, and moves away a little distance, the person becomes unconscious; either he is asleep or in stupor—a brown study. A few seconds may suffice, and the individual might not notice the unconsciousness.

But there are photographs also in the Astral World—impressions of persons and things. Sometimes these picture impressions are taken for astral forms.

12.—The fact that we can think of a soul, picture it, talk of it, is a proof that souls exist. When you lovingly help another, when you go to work to correct your faults, when you feel God-love, then you know you have a soul.

NEW QUESTIONS.

13.—Mother tells me that God can see me all the time, but Father laughs as if he didn't believe it. Please, Mr. MERCURY, tell me, does God really see me?

14.—Who are the Devas?

15.—Do Theosophists believe in angels?